

# Hood Canal Bridge East-Half Replacement Closure Mitigation Commitment Plan

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**Washington State  
Department of Transportation**

# Hood Canal Bridge East-Half Replacement Closure Mitigation Commitment Plan

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## 1.0 MITIGATION PLANNING PROCESS

### 1.1 Introduction

The SR104 Hood Canal Bridge spans Hood Canal, a natural, deep-water fjord located west of Puget Sound in Washington State (see Figure 1-1). The bridge connects the Olympic and Kitsap Peninsulas, serving as a vital economic and social link between Clallam and Jefferson counties and the urban centers of central Puget Sound. The bridge will be closed six to eight weeks in May-June 2009 to replace the east half.

As part of the bridge replacement design and permitting process, mitigation concepts were explored, considered for evaluation. The goal of the mitigation program, as stated in the February 2000 report *Hood Canal Bridge East-Half Replacement Closure Mitigation Plan – Preferred Options*, is to “reduce the severity of the impact of bridge closure on the traveling public, especially residents of the Olympic and Kitsap peninsulas.” The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)(see Table 1.1), in cooperation with the Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization (PRTPO) developed a closure mitigation plan for the six to eight-week closure then scheduled for 2006. The PRTPO members represent multiple city, county, and state agencies on the Olympic and Kitsap making their participation vital to a successful closure.

### 1.2 Method

The Hood Canal Bridge East-Half Replacement Closure Mitigation Plan –Preferred Options (or Preferred Options Report) documents over two years of mitigation planning. During that process, an initial list of mitigation activities or “preferred options” was identified and the identified stakeholders, convened to assist WSDOT staff in investigating and configuring the essential elements of a closure mitigation plan. The stated objective was to “develop a coalition of state, regional, local and community partners to provide project guidance, and evaluate project alternatives”. (Preferred Options Report, pg. 18). To achieve their objective, the stakeholders organized into two groups - advisory (or technical), and executive (or stakeholder) (see Table 1.1). The alternatives evaluations resulted in a list of preferred options, each one requiring a preliminary engineering assessment in order to determine its potential effectiveness and suitability.

The selection of preferred options, and preliminary engineering work that followed, was called the Closure Mitigation Plan (CMP) Phase I effort. That effort concluded in February 2002 with selection of the final mitigation strategies by the PRTPO Executive Council. The effort that followed, CMP Phase II, involved a detailed examination of the selected final strategies. From that examination, the Phase II final strategy was defined, each including the required facilities, services, and activities, in sufficient detail in the contracts and specifications for final strategy implementation.

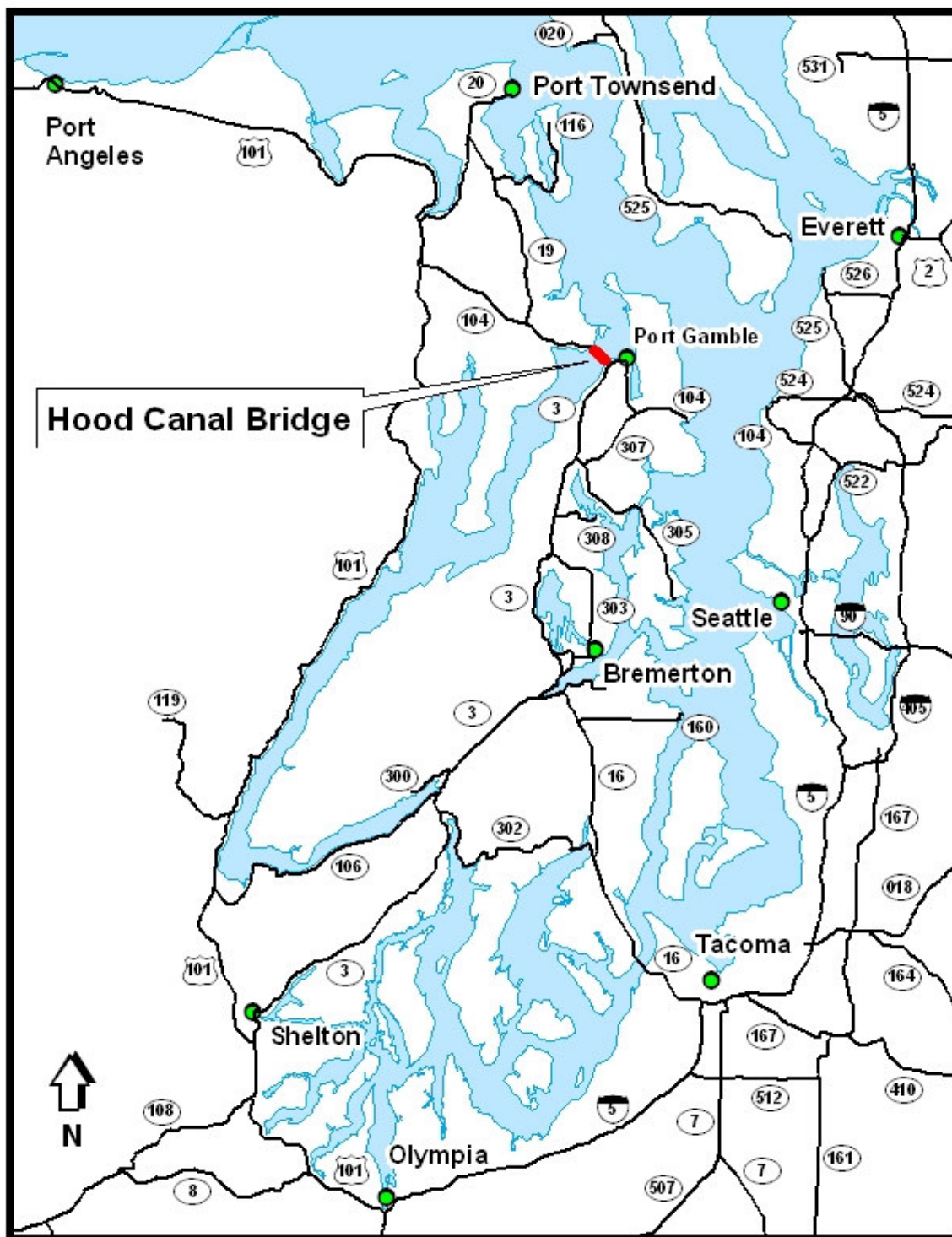


Figure 1-1

**Table 1-1 – Participants in the Closure Mitigation Process**

<b>Group Name</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>
Washington State Department of Transportation	WSDOT
Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Org.	PRTPO
Project Management Team	PMT
Hood Canal Bridge Replacement Advisory Committee	Advisory Committee
Hood Canal Bridge Replacement Stakeholder Committee	Stakeholder Committee
PRTPO Technical Advisory Committee	TAC
Phase II workgroups (a.k.a. HCB Project Committee)	Project Committee
WSDOT Olympic Region Planning Office	OR Planning

### **1.2.1 Mitigation Plan - Phase I**

The PRTPO participation in the effort brought regional and local transportation opportunities and challenges to WSDOT. It was determined the PRTPO connection to local transportation would be an efficient way to provide meaningful guidance about closure impacts, and the potential effectiveness of proposed mitigation strategies to drivers.

The Advisory Committee worked as the technical lead, developing, screening, and recommending particular mitigation alternatives to the Stakeholder Committee. The Stakeholder Committee, in turn, was responsible for corresponding with the Advisory Committee and reviewing their work. The Stakeholder Committee was also responsible for making recommendations to WSDOT about which alternatives were designated “Preferred Options” for lessening the affect of the closure on drivers or bridge users.

For more information about the mission and activities of the Advisory Committee, Stakeholder Committee, and how the Preferred Options were selected, see the Preferred Options Report (<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR104HoodCanalBridgeEast>).

At the September 14, 2001 PRTPO Executive Council meeting, the PMT presented their list of seven of the most effective preferred options. The preferred options are:

- Passenger only ferry (POF) service between Southpoint and Port Gamble
- Car ferry service from Port Townsend to Kingston and Edmonds
- Construction of a northbound and a southbound passing lane at Mount Walker on US 101
- Signage at key decision points
- Public outreach
- Rideshare program



- Provide transportation for those with non-emergency medical needs (i.e. doctor appointments) across the Hood Canal to Poulsbo, Bremerton, and Seattle.

Cost information about selected mitigation strategies was collected during the fall of 2002. The PMT determined that one of the two most expensive strategies (the Passenger Only Ferry – Hood Canal and the Auto Ferry – Port Townsend to Kingston and Edmonds) had to be eliminated in order to provide the project the best opportunity to stay on budget. Three selected workgroups convened as a single Project Committee to determine the best course of action to insure that the mitigation project stayed within budget.

This Project Committee and the PMT met on February 1, 2002 to process and research the list of Final Strategies that would allow the mitigation project to stay on budget. The Project Committee ultimately determined that the list of Final Strategies for mitigation should not include the Auto Ferry – Port Townsend to Kingston and Edmonds strategy primarily due to the high cost. Their work concluded with the selection and endorsement of a list of Final Strategies for mitigation. This list was forwarded to the PRTPO Executive Council for their approval.

### **1.2.2 Mitigation Plan - Phase II**

Phase II of the Mitigation Plan was initiated when the six Final Strategies recommended by the Project Committee were approved by the PRTPO Executive Council on February 8, 2002. These Final Strategies were:

- Assistance with medical needs through the development of a Transportation Medical Association (TMA) and telemedicine opportunities
- Construction along US 101 to upgrade and prepare the highway for use as an alternate route and the primary freight route during the bridge closure.
- Create/increase rideshare opportunities with transit agencies.
- Implement a public outreach campaign and provide advance signing.
- Close the bridge early in the summer season and keep the closure as brief as possible.
- Provide a passenger only ferry between South Point and Port Gamble

The goal of Phase II work was to develop the actual design and specification of the services and facilities required for WSDOT to implement these Final Strategy objectives.

## **2.0 - FINAL MITIGATION STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTATION**

Out of the six Final Strategies one strategy, concerning bridge closure scheduling was transmitted to the design and construction team for their use in determining the closure dates. WSDOT Bridge and Structures office determined that the replacement could not take place from October 1 to April 30 due to typical poor weather conditions, May 1<sup>st</sup> was determined the earliest a closure could occur, and further study was not required.

The PMT met with representatives from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on April 1, 2002 to verify that the recommended projects complied with the conditions for the expenditure of federal funds. The Hood Canal Bridge East Half Replacement is funded through a matching grant provided through the Federal Highway Bridge Replacement and

Rehabilitation Program (HBRRP), project expenditures that are eligible for reimbursement (federal match funds) by the grant are described in the legislation (see Federal Code of Regulations Title 23 (Highways), Part 650.405. Part C). The Washington Division of FHWA is responsible for communicating to WSDOT how the statute will be interpreted. The statute is generally restrictive in its intent, with specific exclusions for items such as “long approach fills, connecting roadways, interchanges, ramps, and other extensive earth structures”.

In this case one criterion strategy by FHWA (only temporary facilities and services would be funded) affected the Final Mitigation Strategy. It enabled WSDOT and FHWA to reach a consensus on how the Medical Transportation, Rideshare, Public Information, and Ferry strategies would be implemented. However, the Alternate Routes Improvement (US101) strategy was rejected for federal matching funds because it was a permanent improvement.

The rest of the chapter describes the elements of and design effort for each of the five remaining Final Strategies. Olympic Region’s Planning Office will assist the Hood Canal Bridge office with medical, transit, and rideshare planning. Olympic Region’s Traffic Office will assist the Hood Canal Bridge office with alternate route and information signing planning. The Hood Canal Bridge Communications Office will lead outreach planning.

Although these five main final strategies will not change, it is understood that the parameters set during the development of the closure mitigation plan were based on existing information for a 2006 closure and could change between now and the actual closure of the bridge in 2009. WSDOT will continue developing plans for the POF and all that it entails, as well as assess recommended temporary improvements. Coordination will continue with the many groups that have an interest in the bridge closure, and most importantly the public will be kept abreast of the project and the options that will be available to them during the bridge closure in 2009.

## **2.1 ALTERNATE ROUTES**

Since approval of this strategy by the PRTPO Executive Council, work by the PMT focused on two categories of improvements: permanent and temporary (This separation in efforts is a result of a determination by FHWA about the funding mechanisms involved in closure mitigation work).

### **2.1.1 Permanent Improvements**

The construction of passing lanes on both the north and south approaches to Mount Walker (between milepost 298 and 300) has been a priority of PRTPO and WSDOT throughout the mitigation planning process. Despite the high level of interest, FHWA determined that permanent improvements to the US 101 facility, like passing lanes, would not be funded with federal participation. Alternative sources of funding were sought and the project is currently expected to be constructed in the 2006 construction season.

Other permanent improvement projects in the WSDOT Capital Improvement and Preservation Program (CIPP) were identified as providing a significant benefit in minimizing



the affects on drivers during the Hood Canal Bridge closure. The projects and their current status are listed below and their locations can be seen on the Figure 2-1.

1. US 101 Blyn/Gardinier Passing Lanes – Construction scheduled for spring 2009.
  - Coordination will take place to prevent any traffic impacts during the closure.
2. US 101 West of Blyn Passing Lanes – Construction scheduled for spring 2009.
  - Coordination will take place to prevent any traffic impacts during the closure.
3. SR 104/SR19 Intersection Improvements – Project constructed December 2005
4. SR 104 Miller Road – Project constructed April 2005
5. SR3/SR303 I/C (Waaga Way) new ramp and channelization improvements – Contract was awarded in November with construction starting this spring.
6. SR3 Imperial Way to Sunny Slope Channelization and Overlay – Construction scheduled for spring 2007.
7. SR3/SR106 South Belfair Signal – Construction scheduled for spring 2007.
8. SR3 Allyn to SR106 Channelization – Unfunded ad date of February 2011.
9. US 101 SR104 to Quilcene River overlay – Project constructed September 2005
10. US 101 Mt. Walker to Brinnon Lane overlay – Project constructed September 2005
11. SR 3 Thompson Rd to SR104 Overlay – Project constructed March 2006
12. US 101 SR106 to SR 108 Overlay – Project constructed March 2006.

### **2.1.2 Temporary Improvements**

In 2002, the PMT initiated an effort supported by the Olympic Region Traffic Office to 1) identify state highway locations that would experience the most critical traffic areas of congestion during the bridge closure, and 2) determine the best temporary measures to lessen the congestion.

#### *Preliminary Results of the Traffic Impact Analysis*

The Olympic Region Traffic Office examined the most likely alternate routes, including:

- SR 104 - US 101 - SR 106 - SR 3 – SR 104
- SR 104 - US 101 - SR 106 - SR 3 – SR 305 – SR 307 – SR 104
- SR 104 - US 101 – I-5
- SR 104 - US 101 - SR 106 - SR 3 – SR 302 –SR 16.  
(This alternative route would have the least usage as compared to other alternative routes.)

Recommended temporary mitigation projects:

T1. SR 104 / Pacific Ave: Provide a right-turn pocket or taper westbound to northbound with standard right turn corner design. If the inbound and outbound traffic of the park and ride (for POF) during the bridge closure are higher then anticipated in the analysis, then the recommendation is to implement an All-Way Stop Control at this intersection with simple signing change.

T2. SR 3 / Sam Christopherson Road: Extend the existing truck climbing lane on the SR 3 north bound (on south side of the intersection) about 900 feet to the north, back to this

intersection. Revise the lane configuration of the northbound traffic at the south approach to create an exclusive left-turn lane and two through-lanes with the outside lane to be a shared through-right lane.

T3. SR 104 / Shine Pit Access (South Point POF-P&R Access): Provide a standard right turn corner design, eastbound to southbound onto the Shine Pit Access.

T4. US 101 / SR 119 Hoodsport (Lake Cushman Road): Provide a right-turn lane eastbound to southbound and a left turn lane of 150 ft northbound to westbound. Since roadway area is narrow and the bridge constraints at the north approach, it is recommended to modify the intersection with best-fit striping plan that reflects the recommendations listed above and meets the minimum requirements as a temporary condition.

It is anticipated that the evaluation of the recommended temporary mitigation projects will begin in the summer 2006. The locations of the projects can be seen on Figure 2-1.

### **2.1.3 Incident Management Plan (IMP)**

An Incident Management Plan was developed to coordinate the needs and responsibilities of WSDOT Incident Response Team (IRT), WSDOT Maintenance, and Washington State Patrol (WSP) for the two closures that took place during 2005. This also included the installation and operation of, signage, Variable Message Sign (VMS), and Highway Advisory Radio (HAR). A modified version of this plan will be used during the 6-8 week closure.

# Project Improvement Map

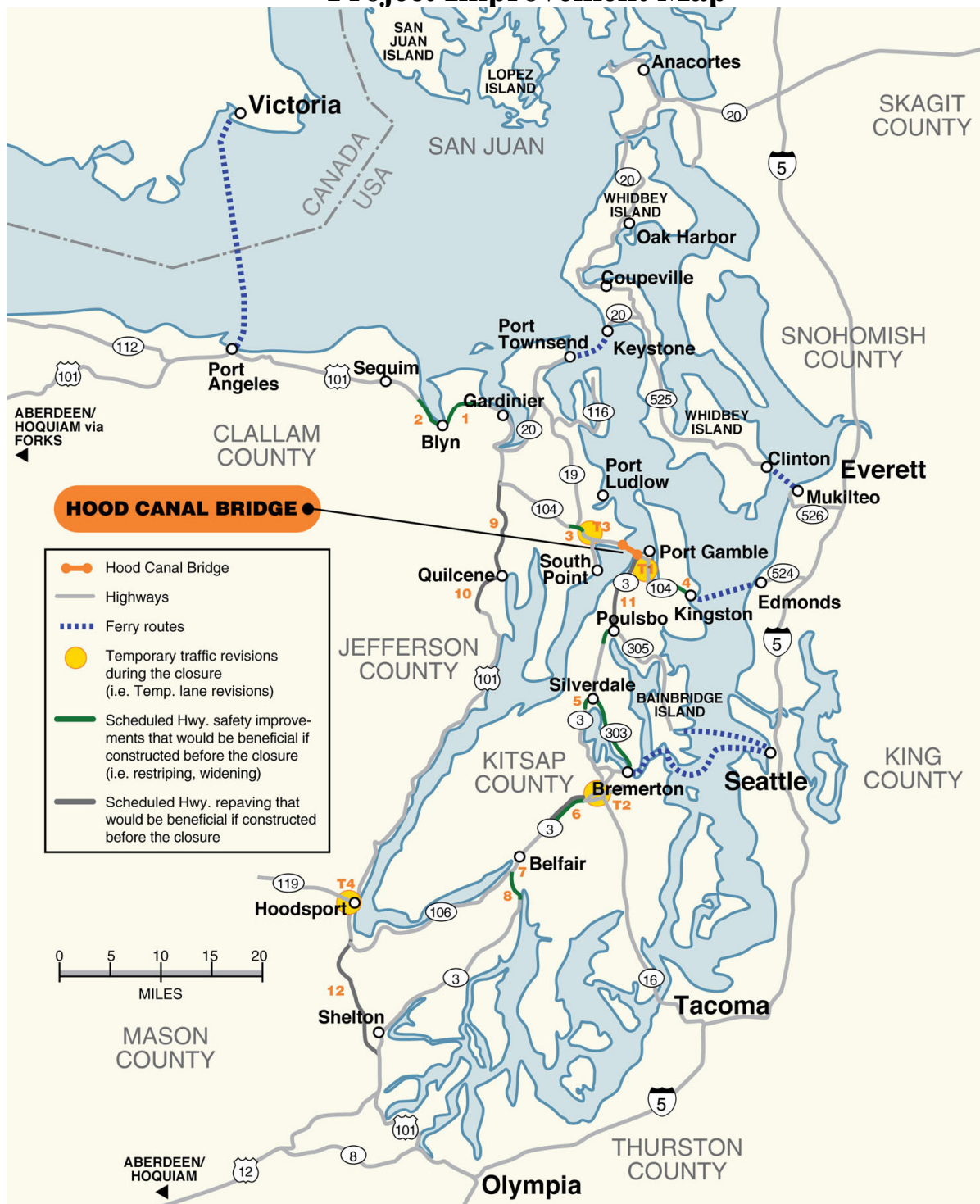


Figure 2-1

## **2.2 PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSFERS**

### **2.2.1 Ferries**

A passenger only ferry service is proposed to move people across the Hood Canal while the bridge is unavailable. The ferry will operate between terminals at South Point (Jefferson County side) and Port Gamble (Kitsap County side). An initial review of this service by the PMT indicated that the required boats would have a capacity of approximately 150 passengers, and that the boat needed to be capable of making the one way crossing in no more than 20 minutes. In addition, qualifying boats would need to be capable of docking at the limited facilities available at the proposed terminals, and they must be accessible to passengers in accordance with provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

A conceptual schedule of ferry departures has been developed. In general, it is expected that twenty minute departure intervals would be necessary during the morning and afternoon peak travel periods, with thirty minute intervals during mid-day, and sixty minute intervals in the evening. The ferry expects to operate from 4:00am to 11:00pm. A total of three boats are expected to be in service, with a fourth available as a backup. The ferry departure times shown in the conceptual schedule (Closure Mitigation – Final Report) are based on the first departures at Kingston and Bainbridge, with subsequent runs timed according to expected capacity needs only. Transit departures from Port Gamble for WSF terminals at Kingston or Bainbridge will be timed to meet scheduled WSF arrivals. Therefore, any dockside passenger waiting is expected to take place in Port Gamble.

### **2.2.2 Terminals and Parking**

Terminal locations and facility requirements were established by the PMT and approved by the PRTPO Executive Council. Park & Ride operations will require parking for up to 1500 vehicles (about 12 acres), with associated traffic, transit, environmental, and security improvements.

The South Point operation will require a remote parking lot at the Shine gravel pit operation due to the limited reasonable alternatives immediately adjacent to the South Point Terminal. The Port Gamble terminal has sufficient space at the terminal for the required 1500 stalls. Neither parking operation will involve asphalt paving since this type of improvement has been interpreted as permanent, and therefore ineligible for Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program funds. The exception to this is the area that requires paving in order to conform to ADA requirements.

At both terminals, traffic/transit improvements include a paved transit island and shelter/portable toilets, curbing, signing and erosion control. Security provisions will include gates, fencing, lighting, and trained patrol personnel. Operation and maintenance of the Park and Ride facilities, such as security, toilets, trash removal, and coordination with the ferry terminal operation, will be performed by Jefferson Transit at Shine gravel pit and Kitsap Transit at Port Gamble under WSDOT direction. Memorandums of Understanding have been signed with the transit agencies regarding this work.

Good communication between the transit agency operating the park and ride and the port agent of the passenger-only ferry operations has been identified as a key component to a successful timely POF service. A communication plan will be in place prior to the bridge closure.

### **2.2.3 Transit**

A committee consisting of transit agencies, representatives from the PRTPO, WSDOT, and local jurisdictions, met on July 24, 2002. The committee developed a group of transit mitigation strategies that provide a balanced approach to support the South Point to Port Gamble passenger only ferry and respond to the temporary impacts resulting from the construction-related closure of the Hood Canal Bridge. During the meeting, it was recommended that the transit agency managers meet with WSDOT separately to discuss technical requirements and issues and directly assist in the development of a public transit connection system to be implemented during the bridge closure.

The transit agencies (Clallam Transit, Jefferson Transit, and Kitsap Transit) first met on August 23, 2002 to consider the expected passenger service volumes and determine a course of action for compiling the transit component. The agencies were requested to develop a transit component that would support WSDOT's proposed South Point to Port Gamble passenger only ferry service and park and ride facilities as well as support the medical mitigation recommendations proposed by the Medical Mitigation forums. WSDOT and transit agencies subsequently met three more times and presented their final proposal to the Transit Committee on February 13, 2003.

During discussions with the transit agencies, it was agreed that the proposed transit support to the ferry service would replace current transit services. The regional transit agencies would continue to meet the on-going needs of their county residents throughout the length of construction. The services proposed by the transit agencies are in direct response to parameters proposed by WSDOT. These parameters center on the POF as an integral portion of any transit connection system that is provided. The parameters or assumptions included:

- Primary focus of the transit mitigation efforts will be on weekday commuter trips. That weekend ferry and transit service could be modified to reflect the different weekend travel peak periods.
- That two 1,500 vehicle Park and Ride lots will be developed and operated on each side of the Hood Canal (currently, Shine Pit on the west side and Port Gamble on the eastside).
- South Point ferry facilities will be limited to transit only and any express service will operate straight to and from the South Point facilities. Vanpool and carpool vehicles will utilize the Shine Pit Park and Ride lot and will not be allowed to park or drop off passengers at South Point.



- The passenger only ferry service will have a capacity of 150 passengers per vessel with a maximum of three vessels per hour yielding a maximum delivery of 450 passengers per hour in each direction during peak periods.
- The passenger only ferry schedule would be based on Washington State Ferry (WSF) sailing times. South Point/Port Gamble passenger-only ferry departures and arrivals would be scheduled to coincide with the departures and arrivals of ferries at Kingston, Bainbridge Island and Bremerton.
- Express and shuttle bus services will be 'fare free' to users.
- Passenger only ferry and transit service would start one week prior to the closure of the Hood Canal Bridge (May 1, 2006) to optimize operation of the POF and bus services.
- Transit express medical transportation services would be offered during weekdays only. This would not replace the current dial-a-ride paratransit service.

The conceptual passenger-only ferry schedule was used for purposes of developing the proposed transit services plan. This schedule was based on anticipated passenger usage that was formulated using the data collected from the Hood Canal Bridge Origin and Destination survey (Preferred Options Report February 2003) as well as the departure arrival times of WSF ferries on the Kitsap Peninsula. The Travel Behavior Study (Final Report June 2003) indicated that approximately 20 percent of the bridge users would use the passenger only ferry. In order to ensure that enough capacity was built into the ferry service, for planning purposes the schedule was developed using a 30 percent usage rate.

### *Transit Service Strategies*

An initial conceptual transit support plan developed by the transit agencies provided for bus service to meet each passenger only ferry arrival and departure at their respective ferry dock. Upon review, the plan was modified to take in account that while the maximum capacity must be accounted for, it is unlikely that the maximum demand would be placed on the system throughout the length of the service day. It is anticipated that a steady build-up and subsequent reduction of services, as the day progresses would occur. During the peak morning and evening commute periods, it is anticipated that a full complement of vessels (3) would be operating daily. Peak morning and evening times are still being evaluated.

**Clallam Transit** - Clallam Transit would provide daily express transit service from Port Angeles/Sequim area to the South Point Ferry Dock for the six to eight-week closure period in mid- 2009. It is anticipated that daily express service would run during the peak hours of the day. Three express runs would be made during morning peak period with busses timed to coincide with the South Point ferry departure times. Three express service runs in the afternoon would also operate during the evening peak periods. No other new service is anticipated. Clallam Transit will rely on existing transit service. Clallam Transit also currently has three daily connections with Jefferson Transit that could be utilized during the off peak periods.



**Jefferson Transit** – Jefferson Transit will operate a shuttle service between Shine Pit park-and-ride facility and the South Point ferry dock. The shuttle service proposed assumes that most of the demand on the system will be below maximum capacity; however, it does allow for easy response to a maximum demand if needed.

The general configuration calls for the arrival of two transit coaches at the ferry dock per ferry sailing: one at ten minutes prior to departure and the second at five minutes prior to departure. These vehicles are also timed to accommodate an arriving ferry, allowing two transit vehicles to meet each boat. The level of service provided by the shuttle would parallel that of the ferry. The actual shuttle operation requires the following: Five (5) transit coaches in service during the peak period, one (1) wheelchair dedicated transit coach in service during the peak period, and one stand-by coach in service during the peak period.

In order to meet the demands of those individuals requiring American with Disability Act (ADA) accessibility, a specific vehicle will be assigned to operate during the peak service hours to handle wheelchairs and other special needs. This vehicle would have a minimum of two wheelchair locations and would operate on an on-call basis between the park and ride lot and the ferry dock.

In addition, Jefferson Transit plans to provide direct service between the South Point ferry dock and the Port Townsend/Port Hadlock/Port Ludlow area. Currently, Jefferson Transit operates four weekday roundtrips between Port Townsend and Poulsbo, and two Saturday/Sunday roundtrips. This service represents the only existing public transit linkage across the Hood Canal Bridge. Ridership is steady and the route delivers approximately 80 weekday trips and 35 weekend trips. In order to maintain this service as close to normal as possible and provide direct linkage between Port Townsend and the east side of the Hood Canal, the service will remain with a few key adjustments. The route will operate directly to the South Point ferry terminal. Jefferson Transit will not have to travel past the bridge, therefore an operational savings is incurred. This savings would be reinvested into the mitigation service by operating additional express service between Port Hadlock/Port Ludlow during peak commute hours.

**Kitsap Transit** - Kitsap Transit is not making the same assumption as Jefferson Transit in that it would need to have enough bus capacity at each ferry arrival/departure to handle a full ferry load of 150 passengers. Instead, Kitsap Transit would have buses meet the ferry arrivals in Port Gamble and provide express service routes to the WSF terminals in Kingston and Bainbridge Island only when there are ferries to meet at those ferry terminals.

Three direct express bus routes would service the Kitsap Peninsula: one express route would directly go to Kingston Ferry Terminal; another would directly go to the Bainbridge Island Ferry Terminal with a stop in Poulsbo, and a third bus route will go directly to Silverdale to the Kitsap Transit Transfer Center. From the Kitsap Transit center connections can be made to other buses that continue on to Bremerton and locations in-between. No direct express service would be provided to the Bremerton WSF Ferry Terminal, it is expected that connection to the Bremerton terminal could be made through regular bus service. The Silverdale express service is proposed to meet each ferry during regular service hours only

(9:30 am to about 7:00 pm). There would be no service to Kingston or Bainbridge on the weekends. During peak periods, an additional bus on “stand-by” is being evaluated for use in case the scheduled buses cannot accommodate all the passengers bound for a particular destination.

## **2.3 RIDESHARE**

The Rideshare element of the mitigation plan focuses on connecting east Jefferson, Clallam, and Kitsap County travelers assistance services, to provide commuter information and registration for rideshare opportunities prior to and during the closure. Olympic Peninsula travelers desiring to use alternatives such as transit, carpooling or vanpooling to destinations in Kitsap County and the greater Seattle urban area will receive help arranging travel options. Details about the design process and ultimate configuration of this program are described below.

A rideshare interest group, consisting of a subset of the Hood Canal Bridge Mitigation Transit Committee, including Kitsap Transit, Jefferson Transit and WSDOT, developed a ‘shelf ready’ rideshare program for assisting travelers with information about the available transit options (carpools, passenger-only ferry, vanpools, etc.) during the closure. This plan will be updated as necessary to include any changes that might occur between now and the 2009 bridge closure.

In their deliberations, this group discussed the availability of current rideshare services, program requirements, estimated implementation costs, implementation schedule, and potential outreach strategies. The proposed system was configured to operate within Kitsap Transit’s existing rideshare program east of Hood Canal.

Implementing the program west of Hood Canal will require Jefferson Transit to establish and operate a call center and coordinate the establishment of new vanpools as needed.

## Transit Routes

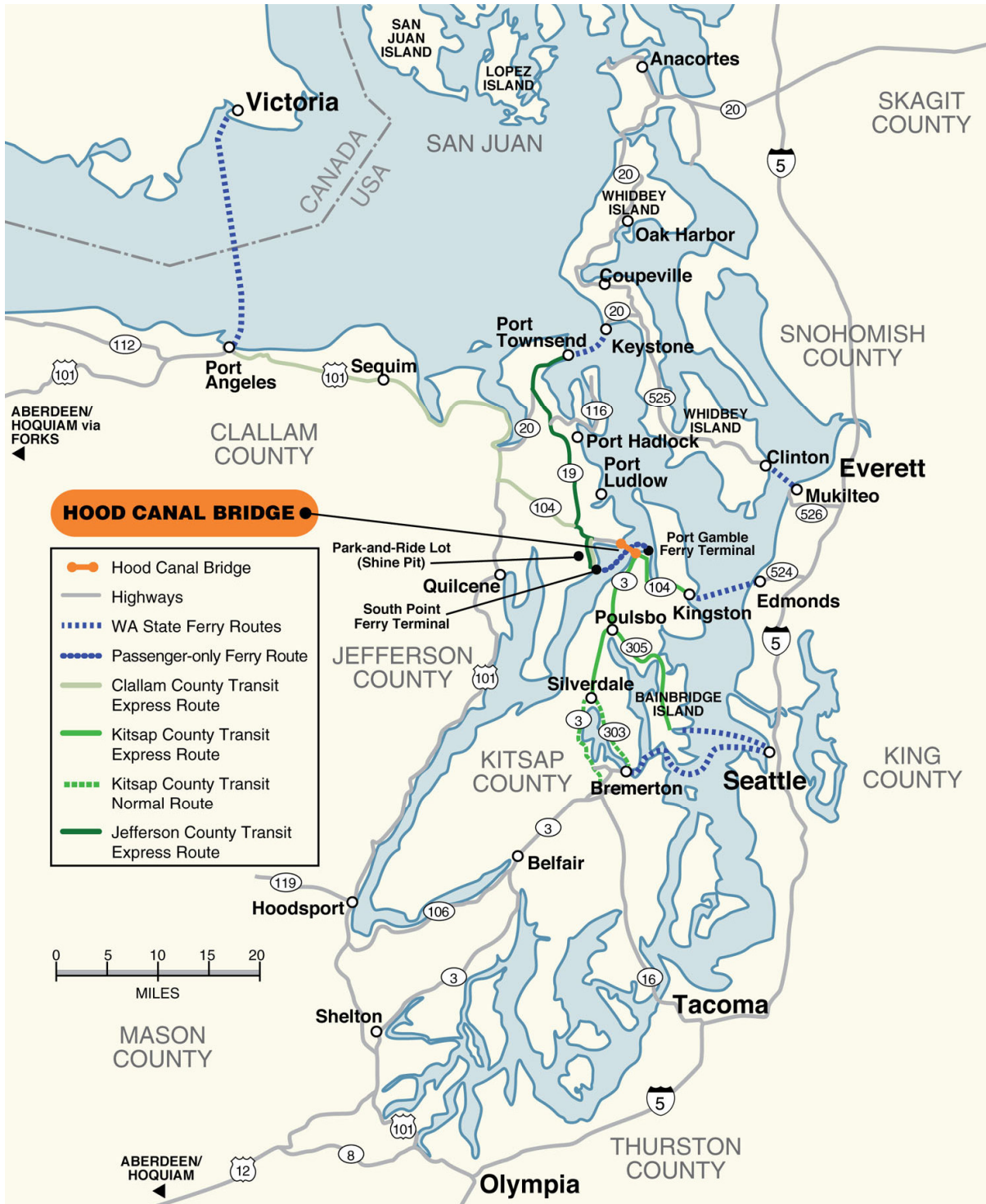


Figure 2-2

### 2.3.1 Rideshare Plan Components

The rideshare group eventually developed a temporary rideshare system for people that utilize the existing Puget Sound Rideshare database system. The proposed rideshare system involves four fundamental elements:

*Twenty-four hour on-line rideshare registration program* - The existing program is located on the Internet at [www.rideshareonline.com](http://www.rideshareonline.com). Users may employ an on-line database to identify their transportation needs and be matched up with others with similar needs. In such cases where personal contact is indicated, King County Metro employees may contact users to put them in touch with the appropriate transit system to serve their needs, such as establishing a vanpool.

*Temporary ride-match call center* – A ride-match call center will be available also the call center will be reachable through a toll free number. It may be possible for Jefferson Transit to implement a call center for the mitigation project with minimal expense other than staffing, particularly if it is attached an already existing one, such as Kitsap Transit.

*Limited trip planning assistance* - Trip planning assistance could be included in the scope of the call center operations. It would support the transit component of the mitigation plan by helping people to find how they can use public transportation to reach their destinations.

*Establishment of Vanpool Groups* – A vanpool is the most efficient method of ridesharing; it groups people by destination and arrival time and provides the vehicle to get them there. A rideshare service would first establish the need for specific vanpool groups. Once a vanpool group has been identified, one or more representatives will establish contact with an administering agency (Jefferson Transit or Kitsap Transit) that will administer a defensive driving course and provide instruction on the use of the vanpool vehicle. Existing and new vanpool groups established as part of the mitigation plan will not be paid for through the WSDOT Closure Mitigation Plan. Vanpool user rates established by the transit agencies will apply to commuters using public agency vanpools.

Up to ten vans could be made available by Kitsap Transit at regular rates to any group that wanted to start a vanpool at the Port Gamble Park & Ride lot. Kitsap Transit currently operates a worker/driver route that goes through Port Gamble bound for Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. This route will be configured to meet an early ferry arrival at Port Gamble. The same bus will meet one of the evening trips departing from Port Gamble. The current worker-driver bus program, which supports the Bangor Naval Base and Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, would be expanded as needed.

### 2.3.2 Rideshare Outreach

Public outreach was identified as crucial element to the success of the rideshare program. The majority of this promotional effort will occur one year before the closure date. Outreach strategies now under consideration include static rideshare promotional signing along the highway, informational posters or rider alerts, WSDOT website, toll-free phone number, and brochures. Proposed brochure display areas include public places on the Peninsula, in ferry

terminals, as well as on the ferries themselves. Telephone information strategies include the use of the 5-1-1 transportation hotline and utilizing the existing toll free information line.

A proposed rideshare Web site will need participation from transit agencies so customers can access all relevant transit agency services. Based on discussions held with Kitsap Transit, it is possible that configuration and deployment of this Internet component of the rideshare outreach strategy could be incorporated into their existing internet program. A web-based “rider alert” program, and an email distribution list similar to that used by WSF, is also proposed for providing immediate notification of service changes.

## **2.4 MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION**

Medical travel has been mentioned consistently in public forums, political discussions, and technical meetings throughout the mitigation study process. Even before medical transportation became a measure the Advisory Committee recommended to WSDOT to help drivers, the full scope of the issue was only beginning to be understood. The process, of finding appropriate solutions was divided into two approaches to help make the task more manageable: controlling supply and demand, and designing appropriate services. These solutions were eventually isolated into two funded WSDOT initiatives: public outreach and medical bus. Both of these initiatives recognized that a broad cross-section of medical and transportation professionals need to be involved to insure that the issues for people who cross the bridge for medical transportation trips received adequate assistance.

The PMT commissioned a study to analyze what was known about medical travel and proposed potential mitigation solutions in order to establish the needs and limits surrounding the medical traveler. The Hood Canal Bridge Medical Travel Mitigation Plan identified a number of issues with the following potential solutions, including fixed route medical bus, telemedicine facilities, increase helicopter evacuations, increases in paramedic staff, and targeted outreach.

At their April 1, 2002 meeting, FHWA and the PMT reviewed draft materials and came to an agreement about what activities would be reimbursable under federal guidelines. Their interpretation of the applicable federal code determined that mitigation activities needed to be temporary in nature, and needed to be directly related to core bridge transportation functions. Based on these criteria, they determined that only the medical bus and targeted outreach would be supported by WSDOT to facilitate medical travel issues.

Targeted outreach started soon thereafter to find members of the medical community who would be interested in closure planning. Work sessions convened in August and November of 2002 to study the potential challenges associated with the closure, and to develop the concepts, requirements, organizations, and resources that might be involved in generating solutions. These work sessions, or forums, divided into three working groups based on areas of interest: emergency transportation, non-emergency transportation, and facilities. The results of these sessions included the generation and review of fifteen narrative documents, or solution papers, which summarized each group’s solutions including the destinations for the medical bus. A summary of these papers can be seen in the Closure Mitigation Report – Final Report.



At their November 13, 2002 meeting, the Northwest Region Emergency Medical Services and Trauma Care Council (NWEMS), a functional unit of the Department of Health's Office of Emergency Medical and Trauma Prevention, decided to convene a new working group to consider the impact of the bridge closure on emergency and non-emergency transports. They originally met quarterly to analyze the challenges, and determine how interested providers and consumers should respond during the closure. WSDOT participated in this effort by providing information about project plans, and documenting the group's progress. WSDOT will set up further meetings as necessary to discuss any changes that may happen.

#### **2.4.1 Non-Emergency Medical Transit Service**

A need to provide dedicated fixed route, as well as on-call transport service to Seattle, Bremerton, and Poulsbo during the closure was identified during the Medical Provider forums. This fixed route medical bus would transport non-emergency patients to identified medical destinations from the Port Gamble park and ride/ferry terminal. It is anticipated that Olympic Peninsula residents seeking medical care in the central Puget Sound area would use their own vehicle, paratransit or existing transit to travel to South Point.

Since the medical destinations were identified as being in the central Puget Sound area, Kitsap Transit was asked to develop a strategy to meet the medical bus requirement. Currently Kitsap Transit's proposal is a paratransit bus that meets selected ferries at Port Gamble and drive to intra-county medical destinations in Silverdale and Bremerton. Medical destinations in Bremerton and Silverdale are clustered close to each other facilitating efficiency bus service to and from Port Gamble. A bus would also meet the ferry on an hourly basis and provide transportation to medical destinations in the Poulsbo area.

To provide seamless connections to medical sites in Seattle, it is proposed that Kitsap Transit would provide bus service that would meet five selected ferry arrivals at Port Gamble between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. Service would continue on through to Seattle via the WSF Bainbridge ferry terminal, making stops at identified medical destinations in Seattle. Departures from Seattle would be scheduled in the afternoon to meet departing Port Gamble ferries.

An outreach program will developed to educate the public and the medical community on the times and routes of the service. The outreach program is scheduled to be in place and running at least 9 months before the bridge closure.

#### **2.4.2 Emergency Medical Service Outreach**

An outreach program with the local medical community and emergency services agencies was established during the bridge closures in August 2005. The outreach consisted of communicating the closure plan and times with the affected EMS groups. This program still remains in place through annual presentation meetings. It is expected that additional meetings will be held prior to the bridge closure.



## 2.5 PUBLIC INFORMATION

This outreach program was developed from the successful Public Information Plan implemented for the August 2005 closures. WSDOT HCB Public affairs office will work with local elected officials, transit agencies, Washington State Ferries, local health care and emergency services organizations and economic development groups on public outreach strategies. WSDOT may also work in partnership with a public relations consultant to refine public and community relations strategies surrounding the six to eight weeks during May-June 2009.

### 2009 Closure Outreach

#### Goals

- A traveling public well prepared to detour around the bridge during the two closures.
- Minimized disruption for travelers who are unaware of the closures at the time they set out.
- Well-prepared peninsula business owners and residents who understand the need and benefit of the closures.

#### Strategy

- Utilize existing communication networks to distribute information. Plug into what already exists for a “grass roots” style campaign.

#### Key Messages

- The bridge is closed ... possible travel options are?
- The peninsula remains open for business
- The engineering challenges and accomplishments associated with the closures

#### Tactics/Tools

A variety of tools and tactics will be utilized to share information with bridge users and drivers.

- **Media Relations:** A complete media plan was prepared separately to complement this overall outreach plan (see the Hood Canal Bridge Project Media Relations Plan for more information).
- **Trade/Travel Trades:** WSDOT will begin notifying RV trade publications and other special interest travel publications of the bridge closures. The goal is to give leisure travelers the heads up a closure is coming and to direct them to the project notice website to learn about the schedule.
- **Internet:** A closure “survival guide”, that includes downloadable detour route maps, a checklist of things to consider if you’re planning to travel to and from the peninsula during the closures, and information about the type of work being done at the bridge, will be created.
- **Advertising/Tabloid Insert/Direct Mail:** Peninsula residents will receive project information through full-page ads, a tabloid inserted local papers, posters and a detour map on WSF and direct mail pieces.

- **Customer Service:** Access to HCB project information will be available through a toll-free number, 5-1-1, WSF customer service representatives, and WSF e-mail alert system.
- **Community Relations:** Speakers bureau presentations will be provided to service clubs, chambers of commerce, special interest associations, schools and churches.
- **Correspondence:** Letters will be sent alerting the groups affected by the closure, such as freight haulers, major retailers dependent on trucked freight, summer youth camps, Chambers of Commerce, medical facilities and emergency services.
- **Signage/Highway Advisory Radio:** An extensive signage plan was developed that includes permanent and portable variable message signs; Highway Advisory Radio transmitters and standard construction signing.
- **Partnerships:** Regional groups, such as Kitsap County Visitor and Convention Bureau, Washington State Parks & Recreation and the US National Parks Service, will distribute WSDOT correspondence and alerts to their constituents.
- **Medical Outreach:** WSDOT will coordinate with the medical community and emergency services to keep medical patients informed of the closure schedule.
- **Video:** The “Hood Canal Bridge: Past, Present and Future” video will be used to assist in helping the public understand the HCB project.

### Measurement Tools

The plan’s effectiveness will be evaluated by:

- Including a feedback mechanism in the tabloid
- Reviewing correspondence, return on feedback mechanisms, hotline calls and traffic counts
- Evaluating web usage
- Analyzing data – qualitative and quantitative findings – and prepare report

A detailed work plan has been developed covering community and business outreach, media outreach, intergovernmental/Legislative outreach, public opinion research/outreach measurement and web site tasks for 2006.

Work plans for 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 will be completed by the beginning of each year.

### 3.0 TIME LINES

Timeline to Design and Construct Closure Mitigation Projects

